

SAFE HOMES PARENTS NETWORK

"Parents, guardians, and community working together for drug-free youth"

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING VISUAL RESOURCES

The following elements are considered essential to effective anti-drug education in a school setting. Items marked with an "" are "must-have" elements; other items serve to increase learning.*

➤ **VIDEO IS THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIUM OF CHOICE FOR YOUTH.**

More importantly, an audio-visual presentation is a practical and economical system through which to deliver instructional techniques that are essential to a drug deterrent program.

➤ **THE MESSAGE MUST CLEARLY BE DRUG-FREE AND PROMOTE A DRUG-FREE LIFESTYLE.***

➤ **SELECT REALISTIC FILMS.**

Youth respond best when people, places, and events are on the screen. They understand that actors deal in fantasy. Students may not react to a message that involves actors, fictional script, cartoons, or other "showbiz" trappings.

➤ **SELECT FILMS WITH CREDIBLE COMMUNICATORS.**

To accept the message, students must first accept that the communicator is credible. Children like hearing from alcohol-and-drug-free youth role models. Knowledgeable doctors or health professionals should discuss health issues on this subject. Legal consequences of drug use are best presented by a uniformed police officer. Recovering drug users can speak of their personal tragedy. Roles should not be mixed.

➤ **SELECT FILMS FROM A QUALIFIED DRUG-PREVENTION WRITER.**

➤ **SELECT FILMS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG USE.***

A discussion of consequences is vital to the psychology of drug prevention. Medical science has established that serious health consequences accompany drug use. Make sure these are adequately described.

➤ **AVOID FILMS THAT INCLUDE SCENES OF EXPLICIT DRUG USE*.**

Scenes of drug use can open a "Pandora's box" of mixed messages – on one hand, "DON'T" and on the other "HERE'S HOW."

➤ **AVOID FILMS THAT PROMOTE FORMER DRUG USERS.**

A good-looking, smooth-talking former drug user can radiate a host of unintentional messages about the ability to bounce back from drug addiction. Limited presentation of former addicts may have benefit, but avoid films that dwell on former users.

➤ **AVOID FILMS THAT ARE INTENDED FOR ADULTS. THESE ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR YOUTH.**

➤ **BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT FILMS THAT LACK DEPTH.**

Programs must do more than urge the student to "say NO" to drugs; they must give the student sufficient motivation to reject drugs, show the student how to tactfully avoid drugs and suggest practical alternatives to drug use.

➤ **THERE SHOULD BE NO ACCUSATION OR CONFRONTATION OF ATTITUDES. THE VIDEO SHOULD PRESENT ONLY OBJECTIVE FACTS AND SHOW CONSEQUENCES OF DRUG-USE*.**

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